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09/707,118	11/06/2000	Susan Day	200-0670	8188

7590

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EXAMINER

MAURO JR, THOMAS J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2143

DATE MAILED: 03/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/707,118

Applicant(s)

DAY ET AL.

Examiner

Thomas J. Mauro Jr.

Art Unit

2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 November 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 06 November 2000 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-20 are pending and are presented for examination. A formal action on the merits of claims 1-20 follows.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the “**virtual team room**” [claim 1], “**team room environment**” [claim 10], “**teamwork tool server**” [claim 10] and “**security server**” [claim 13] must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character “**320**” has been used to designate both “**the required approvals**” [Fig. 17 and page 24 line 15] and “**the worksheet**” [Fig. 18 and page 25 line 9]. Reference character “**350**” has been used to designate both “**report form**” [Fig. 19 and 20 and page 26 line 10] and “**team room environment**” [Fig. 21, not shown, and page 22 line 1]. A proposed drawing

correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

4. The drawings are objected to because they fail to show the necessary textual labels of the various features in Figures 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8-22. Each element in the Figures 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8-22 must be labeled as described in the specification. A descriptive textual label for each numbered element in the figures would be necessary for one to fully understand the figures without substantial analysis of the detailed specification. Any structural detail that is of sufficient importance to be described should be shown and properly labeled in the drawings. See 37 CFR 1.84(n) and (o). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

5. The drawings are objected to because Figures 7-9, 13-14 and 17 contain views that should be labeled separately, for example, 7A, 7B, 7C, etc. See 37 CFR 1.84(u). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Double Patenting

6. Claims 1-20 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,684,212. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they both disclose analogous methods for collaborating and managing data from members of separate organizations or multiple networks.

For example, claim 1 of the present application recites a method for providing a team room environment between a first electronic network and a second electronic network to allow members from both networks to access the team room environment if they are identified in a directory. Claims 1 and 9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,684,212 recites a method of managing data among members of both a first network and a second network in a virtual team room environment wherein users are authorized if they are identified in a local directory. Furthermore, dependent claims 2-5 of the present application recites a LAN [claim 2] which is an Intranet [claim 3] along with an unsecured network [claim 4] which is the Internet [claim 5], whereas claims 3-4 of U.S. Patent No. 6,684,212 calls for both an unsecured and secured network, wherein the unsecured network is the Internet. While U.S. Patent No. 6,684,212 does not explicitly call for the secured network being an Intranet, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use an Intranet of a LAN as the secured network to provide the added security to be able to share and manage data across multiple networks in a manner that would protect the contents from hackers and intruders.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

8. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tatham et al. (U.S. 6,223,177).

With respect to claim 1, Tatham teaches a method of collaborating among team members of separate organizations over a first electronic network and a second electronic network

[Tatham -- Abstract and Col. 3 lines 22-24], the method comprising the steps of:

providing a virtual team room environment supported on a team room server **[Tatham -- Figure 1 – Server, Col. 3 lines 25-29 and Col. 4 lines 19-27 – Server (10), i.e. team room server, hosts dedicated sites which are private office suites which permit group or groupware activity]**, the team room server being coupled to each of the first electronic and the second electronic network **[Tatham -- Figure 1 – Primary (30) and Secondary (40) users share different communication links (15 and 20) and Col. 4 lines 11-18 – Users which are connected over the Internet belong to different networks, i.e. first and second electronic networks]**;

permitting access to the virtual team room to first team members via the first electronic network only if the first team room members are identified in a directory associated with the first electronic network [Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 61-67 – Col. 5 lines 1-14 – **Primary users and those users who are existing Intranet users, i.e. first team members, are permitted to access the virtual team room, i.e. private office suite, over the first network, i.e. Intranet, as long as they are listed on the Intranet-user database, i.e. directory of users, and are given permission by the primary user. These users would generally be people within the given organization or company**]; and

permitting access to the virtual team room to second team room members via the second electronic network only if the second team room members are identified in a directory associated with the second electronic network [Tatham -- Col. 5 lines 15-26 – **If a group member, i.e. team member, is not an existing intranet user, i.e. he is not employed directly by the company hosting the project or site, the administrator or primary user can add the external user, i.e. to the directory of allowed users, so that the external user can use the Internet, i.e. second network, to access the virtual team room, i.e. private office suite, if given permission by the primary user**].

With respect to claim 2, Tatham further teaches wherein the first electronic network comprises a secure LAN [Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 1-8 and Col. 6 line 12 – **An Intranet is part of a Local Area Network (LAN) of a given company or organization, which is secure because it is within the bounds of the company or organization's network, not accessible to average users outside of the network**].

With respect to claim 3, Tatham further teaches wherein the first electronic network comprises an Intranet [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 1-5 and Col. 5 lines 1-9 -- Primary user and existing Intranet users, i.e. members of the company or organization heading or hosting the project, are connected over the Intranet, i.e. first electronic network**].

With respect to claims 4 and 5, Tatham further teaches wherein the second electronic network is an unsecured network, wherein the unsecured network is the Internet [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 11-18 -- Server is connected to the Internet, which is classified as an unsecured network, i.e. second electronic network, which permits external users to connect to the site from anywhere in the world**].

With respect to claim 6, Tatham further teaches defining the virtual team using information provided by the team members [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 25-34 and lines 55-60, Col. 6 lines 8-20 and Col. 7 lines 42-52 -- The virtual team room is comprised of various types information and functionality depending on the project being undertaken. Users supply the information that makes up the contents of the site, i.e. project documents, tasks, calendar dates, etc.**].

With respect to claim 7, Tatham further teaches a method including identification of at least one team leader [**Tatham -- Col. 3 lines 30-33 and Col. 4 lines 43-65 -- Team leader, i.e.**

primary user, is responsible for creating the site and selecting the users which are allowed to have access to the site].

With respect to claim 8, Tatham further teaches wherein the information includes identification of a team purpose [Tatham -- **Figure 3D and Col. 7 lines 42-52 – Purpose of the team is the type and project that they are working on, i.e. Project collaboration, which will include a given project and all of the information concerning the purpose and details of the project being managed].**

With respect to claim 9, Tatham further teaches wherein the information includes identification of sub-teams associated with the virtual team room [Tatham -- **Figure 1 and Col. 3 lines 61-67 – Server hosts multiple sites which are accessible to different sets of users, i.e. sub-teams, such that all users of a project may be able to view site#1, but only one user or a sub-set of users can view another site, i.e. site#2, relating to the same project containing other information].**

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tatham et al. (U.S. 6,223,177) in view of Thackston (U.S. 6,295,513).

Regarding claim 10, Tatham teaches the invention substantially as claimed, a method of providing communication and collaboration among team members, wherein the team members include first members of a first group of members and second members of a second group of members, organization disparate from the first members [**Tatham -- Abstract and Col. 3 lines 22-24**], the method comprising the steps of:

providing a teamwork tool server supporting a team room environment [**Tatham -- Figure 1 – Server, Col. 3 lines 25-29 and Col. 4 lines 19-27 – Server (10), i.e. team room server, hosts dedicated sites which are private office suites which permit group or groupware activity**], the teamwork tool server being coupled to the first members via a first network structure and to the second members by a second network structure [**Tatham -- Figure 1 – Primary (30) and Secondary (40) users share different communication links (15 and 20) and Col. 4 lines 11-18 – First set of members, i.e. primary user and other secondary users within the company are connected via a first network structure, i.e. Intranet, whereas the external secondary users are connected over a second network structure, i.e. the Internet**];

providing a global directory coupled to the teamwork tool server including an identification for each of the first members and the second members [**Tatham -- Col. 5 lines 1-3 – Existing Intranet user database is a listing of all the members of a given system or company, i.e. primary, secondary and external users, who are identified in the system and are allowed to access the system only if given permission by the primary user**];

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providing a local directory coupled to the teamwork tool server, the local directory including a team room user profile for each of a plurality of team room members, wherein the team room members are selected from the first members and the second members [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 61-65 and Col. 5 lines 1-34 – Primary user selects the given subset of secondary and external users from the existing Intranet user database, i.e. global directory, which contains the name, contact information and various other information about the different users, i.e. user profile, and groups them together, i.e. local directory. These members, selected from the first and second members of the first and second networks are the users allowed to access the site]; and**

receiving a request for access to the team room environment from one user of the first members and the second members [**Tatham -- Col. 3 lines 35-49 – Users request access by using an internet browser to communicate with team room environment, i.e. private office suite, by specifying the URL address of the dedicated site].**

Tatham, however, fails to teach verifying the identity of a user and permitting access to the team room environment if the profile matches a given user who has permission.

Thackston, however, teaches a method for providing a virtual collaborative environment wherein users are identified by requiring them to log-in to the virtual environment using a username and password which must be verified before access is granted [**Thackston -- Col. 18 lines 49-58].**

Tatham, does however, introduce the need for security and implements a security system by requiring users to enter a password to access the site. Also, unique passwords allow for differing levels of access to the site for various users [**Tatham -- Col. 5 lines 55-67 – Col. 6 lines 1-7].**

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the logon and authentication requirements, as taught by Thackston, into the invention of Tatham, in order to provide added security measures to protect the “need to know” content from hackers and other illegal intruders over the public unsecured Internet.

Regarding claim 11, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, comprising accepting from the team members information and data [**Tatham -- Col. 3 lines 50-60 and Col. 6 lines 8-19 – Team members, i.e. primary, secondary or external users, can store information, such as calendar information or tasks, and data, i.e. project information, documents, etc.].**

Regarding claim 12, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the information comprises document information, task information, meeting information, milestones and calendar information [**Tatham -- Col. 6 lines 8-19, lines 30-33, lines 41-44 and lines 53-62 – Various information is stored in the office suite, including calendar information, milestones, task information and document information].**

Regarding claim 13, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the teamwork tool server is coupled to a security module for verifying identification information [**Thackston -- Figure 9 and 10 and Col. 18 lines 40-58 – Separate authentication module processes the user name and passwords to permit access to the various users of the system. This module is solely responsible for administering security to the system].**

Regarding claim 14, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, further comprising accepting information from the team members and defining a structure of the team room environment in accordance with the information [Tatham -- Col. 3 lines 50-60 and Col. 4 lines 55-65 – Primary user is responsible for creating site based upon the type of project and the information which is necessary. Primary user along with all other users who have access can store, modify, add and delete information to define the structure of the private office suite, i.e. team room environment, based upon the needs of the project or collaboration effort].

Regarding claim 15, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the information comprises identification of a team leader and a team member [Tatham - Col. 3 lines 30-33 and Col. 4 lines 43-65 – Team leader, i.e. primary user, is responsible for creating the site and selecting the users, i.e. team members, which are allowed to have access to the site].

Regarding claim 16, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the information is retained in the local directory [Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 61-65 and Col. 5 lines 1-34 – Primary user selects the given subset of secondary and external users from the existing Intranet user database, i.e. global directory, which contains the name, contact information and various other information about the different users, i.e. user profile, and groups them together, i.e. local directory. These members, selected from the first and

second members of the first and second networks are the users allowed to access the site and are obviously stored in some type of directory of permitted/allowed users].

Regarding claim 17, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the information comprises association information, the association information defining an association between the team room environment and a project [**Tatham -- Col. 3 lines 50-60 and Col. 7 lines 42-53 – Primary user, when creating site, associates the type of project with the specific site being created, i.e. project collaboration, document managing, etc.].**

Regarding claim 18, Tatham-Thackston teach the invention substantially as claimed, wherein the first network structure and the second network structure each comprises one of an unsecured network [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 11-18 – Server is connected to the Internet, which is classified as an unsecured network, i.e. second electronic network, which permits external users to connect to the site from anywhere in the world]** and a secured network [**Tatham -- Col. 4 lines 1-5 and Col. 5 lines 1-9 – Primary user and existing Intranet users, i.e. members of the company or organization heading or hosting the project are connected over the Intranet, i.e. first electronic network, which is secure because it is contained inside the LAN].**

Regarding claim 19-20, these are method claims similar to the method claimed in claims 5 and 2 respectively. They have similar limitations; therefore, claims 19-20 are rejected under the same rationale.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Zhu (US 2002/0194272) discloses a method for connecting two or more users via the Internet to a real-time data conferencing and collaboration system.
- Fredell et al. (U.S. 6,678,698) discloses a web-based method for communication and managing project information among various users.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas J. Mauro Jr. whose telephone number is 703-605-1234. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A. Wiley can be reached on 703-308-5221. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

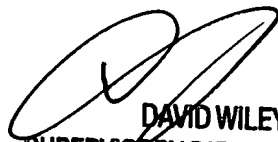
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TJM

February 29, 2004



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